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PROMENADE

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the american square dance group ~ new york, n.y.

"The purpose of the American Square Dance Group is to make available those rich stores of native dance, music, and general Americana which comprise American folk culture; to conduct activities without regard to race, creed, color or social position; to cooperate with those who hold similar views."

Constitution of the A.S.D.G.

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There is much to be said about this newest fad of "popularizing" folk music. During, lo, these many weeks, many American citizens have suffered with Irene, who apparently can't say goodnight. And lately, the girl with the roving eye has been roaming the air waves. The list is growing and there seems no end.

Folk songs have a habit of becoming old friends, beloved friends, and there are few of the genuine old songs that do not endear themselves to those who sing them. Few, indeed, are those that become boring, even after constant repetition. But, in the new "popular" arrangements, the folk songs have acquired new color, and their familiar personalities are lost in swooping orchestrations and modern harmonies.

Songs that, for generations, have been sung around kitchen stoves and fireplaces, in corn fields and cotton fields, have drifted from front porches across lonesome valleys, are rapidly becoming standard repertory in city night clubs. Songs that have lulled countless numbers of little children are now, thanks to the ever present juke box and television set, encountered in practically every bar and grill around the country.

What all this is leading up to is simply my own personal protest about what is happening to Woody Guthrie's wonderful documentary "Dusty Ole Dust." This song, which I have used for many years in teaching American people about America, has lost all its original significance, and has become completely innocuous.

I didn't mind about Leadbelly's theme song, "Irene, Goodnight," for I felt that it was a tribute, of sorts, to Leadbelly. I also felt it might be of some financial assistance to his widow, Mrs. Martha Ledbetter. Nor did I care when "The Fireship" turned into the "Roving One", or whatever it's called now, and certainly nobody really minded when "Wandering" became popular.

But now rumor reaches me that one person, unknown, is considering popularizing "Mary Hamilton." And that, as my aunt Lulie used to say, "just capsizes the climax."

Sorry, Weavers. I still love you and think you're doing a swell job--anyway!

Margot

ISRAELI FOLK MUSICIANS

Hillel Rabinadov, who plays the flute, and his wife, Aviva, are currently appearing in the Habibi, New York's first Israeli night club.

To say that Mr. Rabinadov plays the flute is not really revealing the type of music this folk musician plays. For his flute is the chalil, a variation of the Arab's shepherd's pipe. It's tone takes one back several thousand years. Don't miss this music, and the songs they sing!

ODD COUPLE PROMENADE

Collected from the calling of "Pop" Smith, in New Lebanon, New York, in August, 1950, by Johnny O'Leary.

FORMATION: Square set.

MUSIC: "On the Road to Boston."

INTRODUCTION:

Right hand to your partner
Grand right and left.
Meet her and swing her,
And promenade home.

CALLS:

1) First couple right, balance four,
Right and left.

2) All four form a ring, circle and add two more,
And now you're six.

3) Allemande left, grand right and left,
Odd couple promenade the outside.

4) Everybody swing.

5) Gents in with a right hand star,
Ladies solo, and right you go.

6) All go back on the other track.

7) Everybody swing.

CHORUS:

8) Allemande left, grand right and left,
Meet her and swing her
And all promenade.

DESCRIPTION

Introduction

All partners face each other. Each gentleman takes his lady's right hand in his right hand and, passing his partner by the right shoulder, meets the next lady and takes her left hand in his left, passing her by the left shoulder. Continue until original partners are facing each other on the opposite side of the square from which they started. All swing partners and promenade home. The promenade is in "Skating" position, with right hands on top, and with the gentlemen on the inside of the set.

continued

CALLS: 1) The first couple moves to the second couple and faces the dancers of that couple. All four dancers balance by stepping on their right feet, swinging their left legs across and in front of their right legs. Then the dancers step on their left legs and swing their right legs across and in front of their right legs. The two couples then perform the right and left figure. The dancers move toward each other and pass, with the ladies going between the gents, passing left shoulders as they do this. When in the opposite place they turn as a couple, each lady moving forward, each gent moving backwards, ending with the lady on the right of her partner. The figure is repeated to gain original places, with the first couple facing the second.

2) Couples one and two join hands in a ring and circle around to the left. The third couple joins the circle on the left of the first couple. All six dancers circle to the left.

3) The three couples do a grand right and left as described in the Introduction. While they are performing this figure the fourth couple promenades around them, counterclockwise, and returns to original position.

4) All couples swing in place

5) The four gentlemen form a star in the center of the set by joining their right hands; they move around, clockwise. At the same time the four ladies promenade single file, around the outside, counterclockwise.

6) All go back the other way, the gents turning and joining their left hands in a star, the ladies turning promenading clockwise.

7) All couples swing.

8) The gentlemen face the ladies on their left, their corner ladies, and all join left hands. Walk once around, counterclockwise and return to place. Partners face each other, join right hands and perform the grand right and left. When partners meet on the opposite side of the set, swing, and all promenade to original places.

9) The second couple becomes "active", moving out to the third couple. The entire dance is repeated from number one.

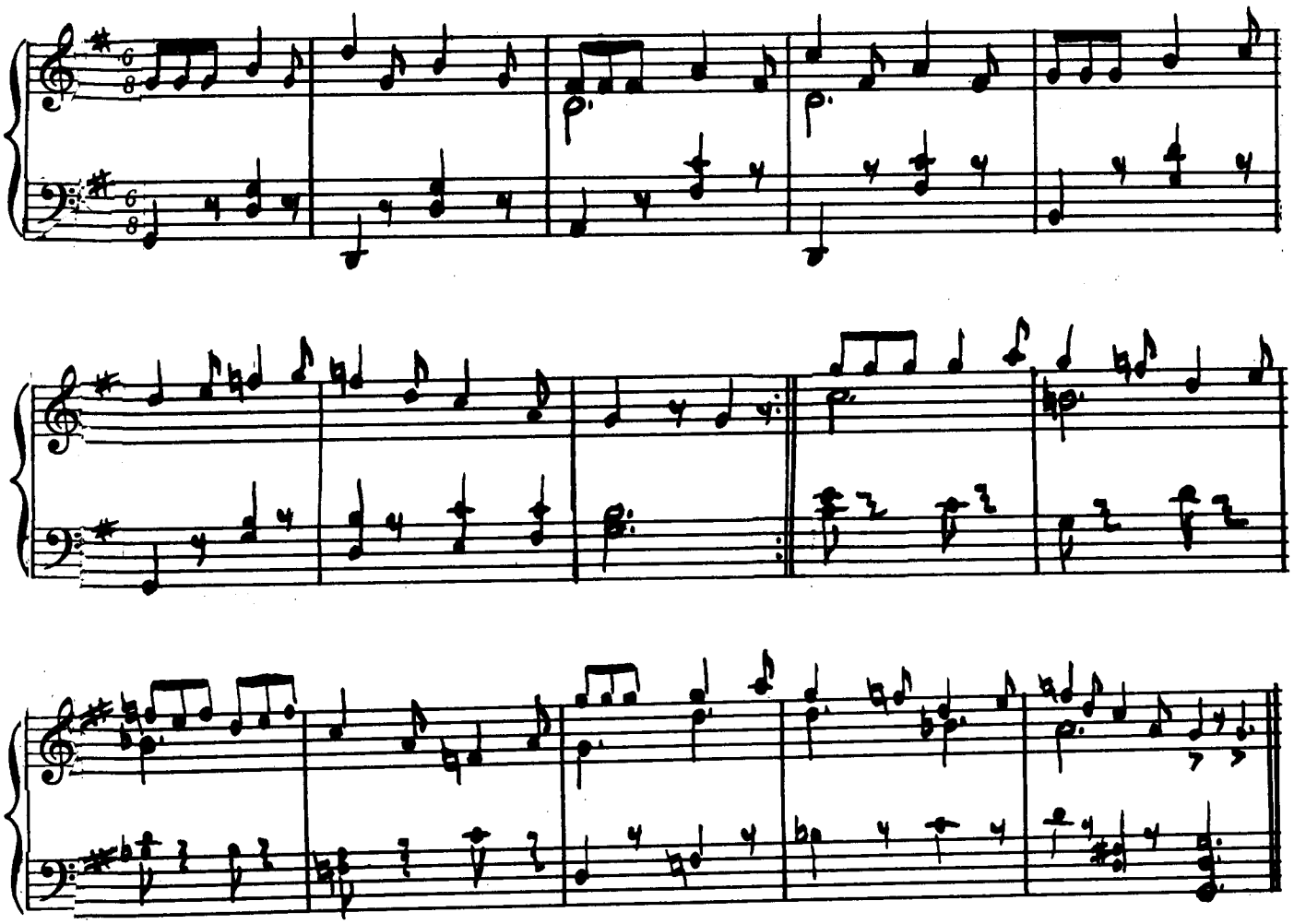
10) Each couple becomes "active" in turn and performs the dance figures from number one.

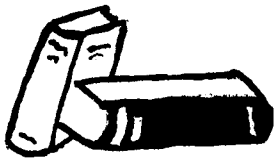
NOTE: The final chorus may be used as the ending call by adding to it the call, "Honor your partners all," which means that all the gentlemen face their partners and bow to them. The ladies curtsy.

WHITEWASH KITTY

This tune was found in Howe's Eclectic School for the Flute, without a Master: Containing new and complete Instructions, Rules and Exercises, with about 200 Pieces of the latest and most Popular Music of the Day,--Polkas, Galops, Polka Redowas, Schottisches, Waltzes, Marches, Quicksteps Contre and Fancy Dances, Songs, Etc. Boston: 1872.

That is the title of the book, and it means every word of it! David Farjeon arranged the tune for us. Compare it with some of today's tunes!





PENNSYLVANIA SONGS and LEGENDS
George Korson, Editor
Philadelphia; University of Pennsylvania Press; 1949. $5.00.

This book is an outgrowth of the modern, functional, view of folklore, in which the "folk" as well as the "lore" are equally important. Hence, folklore becomes a phenomenon of what B. A. Botkin calls "acculturation-- the process by which the folk group adapts itself to its environment and to change, assimilating new experience and generating fresh forms."

Springing from the original creative vigor of the American pioneers and the later immigrants, Pennsylvania first shared with the rest of the United States a common heritage of folklore. With the unfolding of the Industrial Revolution and because Pennsylvania was one of the nation's greatest industrial states, a folklore distinctly her own was generated. Steelworkers, oil well-drillers, lumberjacks, and miners, isolated from the broad currents of Pennsylvania life, achieved complete integration, acting and feeling as a group. Thus were present the essential elements for the growth of folk lore. Wandering minstrels, bred by the basic industries, were important in spreading the songs and stories throughout Pennsylvania and beyond. Finally, folklore, as we now see it, adjusts to changing times and conditions, It is not surprising, therefore, to find some of the material reflecting current problems.

All this is traced in the thirteen chapters prepared by different authorities on each phase of folklore covered. Numerous enjoyable examples lend color and substance to the fabric. However, it is not complete. It was not meant to be. The book offers merely a sampling of the main currents of Pennsylvania folk culture from the birth of our country to the present day.

Those who love tall tales will discover in these pages a veritable treasury. For the most characteristic form of traditional tale in this country is the tall story. It is not surprising that with a free frontier, unlimited natural resources, invigorating climate and a free people building a dream, Americans developed the knack of doing things-- and that included telling stories-- on a big scale.

Ricky Leighton.

OUT OF TOWN NEWS

San Diego, Calif.
International Night; songs, dances, and talks describing the cultures of many nations. Balboa Park. Admission is free. Feb. 16.

Taos, N.M.
Indian Dance; Spanish-American interpretation of Plains Indian Dance. Feb. 4-5.

Phoenix, Ariz.
Valley of the Sun Square Dance Festival; Champion dancers, callers and fiddlers will be chosen. Feb. 9-10.

The Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department has introduced a series of square dance lessons for visitors, Instruction is divided into sessions for beginners, intermediate and advanced dancers. There are now thirty square dance clubs in Phoenix!

St. Louis, Mo.
The Seventeenth Annual National Folk Festival; Individuals and groups of dancers, singers, and musicians will present the folk traditions of America, If you wish to participate or know of any who would, please write to Sarah Gertrude Knott, 706 Chestnut St., St. Louis. The performances will take place in Kiel Municipal Auditorium. April 4-7.

TWO LITTLE ROSEBUDS

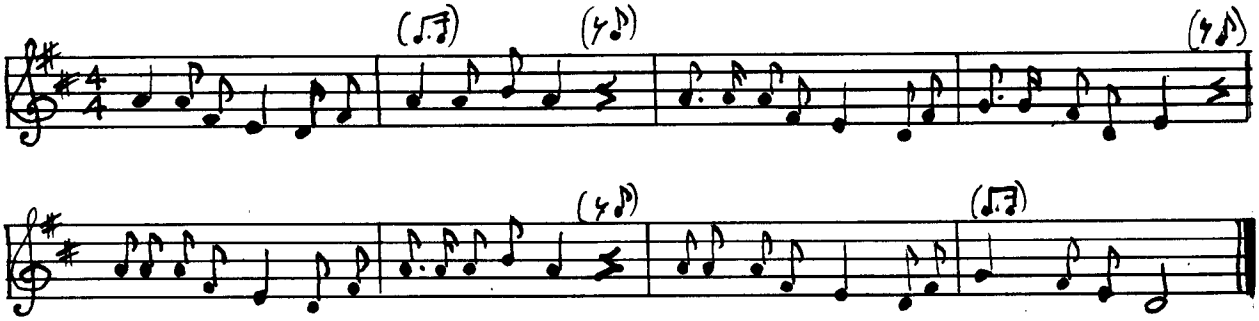
This is a song Joe Bossom learned while he was visiting down South. Joe says, "I learned this song from two sisters, Louise and Pearl Chastain. They live on Flat Mountain, near Highlands, North Carolina. They sang this song, as well as many others, without accompaniment, in the old style. Since then I have heard other versions of the tune and also of the words, but I like this version the best."

Two little rosebuds, rosebuds so fair,
Were wading in the mill pond
When songs were in the air.
They were bright and cheery,
Though neither one could swim,
They waded in deep water, when Jesus called to them.

Chorus: Two little rosebuds were taken to their home,
To make their bloom in heaven, to decorate the throne
In that bright home in heaven.
Those two little ones so sweet
Were wading in the mill pond,
In Jesus are asleep.

Henrietta and Margaret were loved by one and all,
In each other's arms they died in answer to the call.
It's hard to live without them, it makes our hearts so sad,
But we know they are happy, so rejoice and be glad.

Father and mother listen, your buds will bloom for Him,
They can not come back to you but you can go to them.
Always live for Jesus, and soon your boat will sail,
Watch your step along your life and keep the narrow trail.



A. S. D. G. NEWS

The Christmas season brought us visits from several of the "old-timers," and we were happy to have them dancing and singing with us again. Judy Fields, Shelly Heller, Mona Pine, Marc Nerenstone, George Krassner, Joan Fishman, Barbara Alstadt Sciaky, Benita Lessin, and Paul Schneck joined the group for our Christmas re-union. Sy Herzog managed to wrangle a pass for the New Year's week end, but as we had no meeting that week we missed the opportunity of seeing him in his Marine uniform.

The A.S.D.G choral group went caroling on Christmas Eve, and had a wonderful time in spite of the bitter cold. This group meets every Friday evening to sing early American choral pieces and fuguing tunes, folk songs, lots of rounds, and temperance songs.

We are always glad to hear from our non-active members and perhaps the most non-active of them all, at present, is Irving Feinberg, who is in the hospital with a "bad" leg. Judy Altstadt writes from Paris that she keeps up with the folk world by listening to a Sunday program of American folk music over a local French station. "They play everything--Leadbelly, Woody Guthrie, Jean Ritchie and Oscar Brand."

George Roth has joined the list of temporary, inactive members. He slipped on the ice, injuring his ankle so badly that he won't be able to dance for a long time.

Margot will begin a course in American folklore at the Dance-Drama School, 115 West 52nd St., on Feb. 5th. The course will include songs, dances, tall tales, play-party games and general Americana. Recordings of authentic and "commercial" folk music will be played and compared, and members of the A.S.D.G will perform some of the more unusual American quadrilles.

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